

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIV. THE TALE THE OLD LETTERS TOLD.

ARCHIE, when he left Anastasia, felt very shaky and dizzy, and was glad to stop at a cottage near the station to beg for a glass of water and a few minutes' rest. Hardly, however, had he sat down when he sank into a stupor of the kind which had overcome him in the train, and which now so terrified the good folk of the cottage that they sent at once for the village doctor. They were not made easier by the doctor's report that it was a bad case of fever. What was to be done? That, to the doctor's mind, depended upon whether he promised to be a paying patient or not. If he did not, he ought to be taken forthwith to the Ryecote fever-hospital; if he did, it was much more becoming that, as a gentleman, he should be taken care of in the village. Therefore the doctor suggested that they should search his pockets and his purse for a card with his name and address upon it. Archie's purse having been examined under this pretext and found to be satisfactorily full, the doctor not only decided against his removal to Ryecote, but upon his removal to his own house and care. He had already two lunatics in his charge, and the addition therefore of a delirious patient was not of much account.

Now, the business of keeping lunatics is demoralising. It does not demoralise always, of course, but that is its tendency. A "mad doctor" is naturally inclined to take a despondent view of a paying patient's symptoms—to pronounce him insane when he is sane, or to decline to pronounce him

safe when he is perfectly cured. Now, Dr. Dakin from long practice had got to be an adept in the art of keeping a patient as long as possible on his hands. Therefore, though Archie came to himself for a short time in the evening, and then begged that his mother should be telegraphed for, and gave her address, "Mrs. Pybus, Vicarage, Edgburn, Leeds," the doctor, fearing that she might insist upon his removal, conveniently forgot the address. It was not till three days later, when Archie was again lucid enough to give an account of himself, that Mrs. John heard by telegram how and where he was. Ida's second letter she did not get till a week later, when the Rev. John coming upon it by a lucky chance, at the very moment when he was going to the post, at last re-addressed and forwarded it to Heatherley.

He meant, of course, to have forwarded it the day it came, and had put it carefully aside till the afternoon, when he could post it on his parish round; but out of sight was to be out of mind as regards most mundane matters with the Rev. John, and it was by mere good luck that Mrs. John was favoured with it at all.

Hardly had she received, read, and digested it, before a telegram from the Rev. John almost put its contents out of her head:

"Mr. Tuck is dead. Died intestate. Shall come on by first train with the letters."

"What is it, mother?" cried Archie, who, ill and languid as he was, noticed the sudden distress in Mrs. John's face.

"It's nothing, dear."

"She's married!" he gasped, half rising into a sitting posture, only to fall back again through weakness.

"No, indeed, Archie dear; it's nothing about her marriage, or about her at all.

But telegrams always startle me, as they've never brought me anything but bad news. It's from your uncle, to say he's coming this morning."

As Mrs. John was most rigorous in telling always the truth, and usually the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, Archie was satisfied, as far as Ida was concerned.

"Does the doctor think me worse, mother?" imagining his uncle had been telegraphed for.

"Indeed, no, Archie; he thinks you very much better—out of danger now, he says." Archie lay still, meditating this for a few moments; for his mind, like his hand, took some time now to grasp even light and little things.

"Then why did uncle telegraph?" It was, in truth, the last mode of communication to which the Rev. John was likely to resort in ordinary.

"He wished to consult me about some business, Archie; and, as I couldn't go to him, he has to come here."

"It's about that woman?" he asked, after another interval of meditation. "That lawsuit?"

"It has nothing at all to do with it. Pray don't worry yourself or me about it, dear Archie. The doctor insists on your being kept perfectly quiet; and I mustn't even talk too much to you." Archie, therefore, gave it up and soon forgot it, lapsing back into that dreamy state in which ideas, slipping altogether from under the control of the will, wander aimlessly here and there in all directions, like sheep without a shepherd.

On the Rev. John's arrival, some hours later, he was shown into the doctor's study, where Mrs. John immediately joined him.

"What are we to do about it, dear?" he asked in some agitation, when she had read the lawyer's letter announcing Mr. Tuck's death and Archie's succession to his property.

"Have you brought the letters, John?" she asked in turn, with a look, and in a voice of distress.

The Rev. John produced from his pocket-book the two letters Tom Chown had treasured among those he had received from Archie. Mrs. John read and re-read them without seeming to derive much comfort or guidance from their perusal. The first ran:

"MY DEAREST CHAR,—Need I say how unhappy I was to have to hurry away before our honeymoon was half over? And

the worst of it is the confounded business which took me away will keep me away for another month or more. Pray let me know how your poor father is. I was so glad that he was well enough and forgiving enough to be at our wedding. If he had known all the circumstances of the case, he would have forgiven you before now, and perhaps not forgiven me even now. However, I hope to prove myself more worthy of his forgiveness in the future than I have in the past; and to try to make up to you, too, dear, for all the suffering my selfishness has caused you. —With love to your father and Grace, believe me, dearest Char, ever your loving husband,
GEOFFREY CHOWN."

The second ran:

"DEAR CHAR,—I enclose a cheque for all I can scrape together. It's most unjust and disgraceful that your father should have left you without a penny. If he had meant, as you think, to alter his will, why didn't he do it on the day he said he forgave you—on our wedding-day? I don't believe he ever really forgave you. Grace took good care that he shouldn't. Well, she has got all she schemed for, but it will not prosper with her—mark that. I am sorry I can send you no more than the enclosed, but I never was in such straits for money. I do not really know what to do, or where to turn.—Ever yours,
GEOFFREY CHOWN."

"I have the other letters with me," said Mrs. John, taking a packet from her pocket.

They were letters written by Archie's father to his mother, which Mrs. John had kept for Archie. She took one from the packet and compared its handwriting with that of Tom Chown's treasures. There wasn't the shadow of a shade of doubt that the same hand had written both. The writing was extraordinarily large, and each letter stood a little apart, as in print, from the next, the pen having evidently been raised between the forming of each letter. The spelling besides was bad and peculiar, and uniform in both sets of letters. There were other resemblances, too, which made it evident at a glance to any one that the "Geoffrey Guard" of one set of letters was the "Geoffrey Chown" of the other.

"There's no doubt about it," said Mrs. John, sitting down, leaning her head on her hand, and looking blankly before her. The Rev. John, with one hand resting on the table, looked down upon her helplessly

and hopelessly. "He married this girl Charlotte for her money; and then, when he was disappointed by getting none, he deserted her and married Archie's mother—also for money. He was always in difficulties, and always took the first way out of them that offered."

"It might not have been a valid marriage," suggested the Rev. John.

"With her father and her family at the wedding? They would take care it was valid enough. Besides, it was then his own interest that it should be valid when he expected a fortune with her."

"But it might have been the second marriage."

"Why, Mrs. Guard came a bride to Colston, and that was, you know, just after poor Tom was born. Did his mother seem to you a lady, John?"

"No, I think not; but she might have been," for the Rev. John was not a keen or careful observer.

"I see no way out of it at all," said Mrs. John despondently, after a long pause of thought. "It will be a terrible blow to my boy. No one would feel a disgrace of this kind so keenly."

"Must we make it known, Mary?" asked the Rev. John timidly.

"Do you mean we should allow him to take possession of the property?" cried she, aghast.

"There would be no wrong done if he married Ida."

This suggestion was the result of long and deep meditation in the train; nevertheless, it was made shamefacedly, with a just fear of Mrs. John's scrupulousness.

In a moment all the consequences of acting upon this advice shot through the quick mind of Mrs. John. It would clear at once out of the way Captain Brabazon's rivalry and Mrs. Tuck's opposition to Archie's suit; since the captain certainly cared only for Ida's fortune, and Mrs. Tuck would consider Archie, as her late husband's heir, a more than eligible match. As for Ida herself, so far from wronging her, it would right her—extricate her from a false and wretched position, make her, as well as Archie, happy for life, and at the same time leave her as perfectly in possession of the property as though it had come to her directly.

On the other hand, if they made officious use of this evidence—indirect, inconclusive, merely suggestive—which they had come by unfairly, and which ought to have been buried in Tom's grave, they would wreck

Ida's life and both wreck and embitter Archie's, for there was no disgrace he would feel more poignantly than this of illegitimacy.

Here was a strong case; and here, confirming it judicially, was the venerated authority of the Rev. John. But Mrs. John, having been used to think not for herself only, but for her husband also, was not shaken by this reasoning, nor by the Rev. John's support of it, nor even by the picture which haunted her of the wan and worn face of her boy, lying at that moment between life and death—was not shaken, we say, by these pleadings in her certainty that the suppression of this evidence was wrong, and therefore not to be thought of. The only thing to be thought of was the concealment, if possible, of his illegitimacy from Archie. If only this could be contrived, the rest might go—must go.

Such were the thoughts that passed through Mrs. John's mind as she sat looking haggard, hopeless, years older through the troubles which had come thick upon her of late. At last she said, in answer to the Rev. John's suggestion, "There would be no wrong done if he married Ida":

"There would be no wrong done to Ida, John, but it would be wrong for us to do it; wouldn't it, dear?" looking up into his anxious face, with a meek apology in her own for differing from him on a question of right or wrong.

"But it isn't as though we were certain, or it was certain, Mary."

"We couldn't honestly leave it as it is, dear, I think. We must either make sure how it is ourselves, or let them make sure. I try to think of it as if it wasn't my boy—my boy—"

Here poor Mrs. John broke down utterly, and sobbed for some time almost hysterically, her face buried in her hands. It was heartrending to the Rev. John to see his brave and strong little wife so broken down.

He put a trembling hand upon her shoulder, and stood looking down upon her wretchedly and helplessly.

"But we might save him the knowledge of this disgrace," she said, when she had somewhat recovered herself. "It is all we have a right to do, John, I think?" looking up to appeal for his approval.

"It must be, dear, if you can think so," meaning, of course, that she had everything to bias her judgment the other way.

"But how can we keep it from him?"

"Who wrote to you about it?"

"About his death? Their lawyer, a Mr. Mead; you've just read his letter."

"The secret might be confined to him and Mrs. Tuck, if I saw her as soon as I can safely leave Archie. It could be ascertained if what we fear is true; and then the property might be allowed to pass to Ida, as though it had been left to her by will. Archie is certain to take it for granted that it has been so left to her, when he gets well enough to be told of Mr. Tuck's death. He is sure to wish then to go abroad—and to stay abroad, I am afraid," she added with a sigh, like a sob, given at once to the causes which might expatriate Archie, and to the exile itself.

This does not sound a business-like scheme of Mrs. John's; but it seemed to her, and, of course, to her husband, the best thing, or the only thing rather, which it was at once just, expedient, and promising to attempt under the circumstances.

VERY UN-NATURAL HISTORY.

THERE are several Natural Histories which profess to be complete; this professes to be an incomplete chapter of very Un-natural History.

Let us begin with the mammalia, and be learned and orderly. The lion's place in the books is occupied by the cat in folk-lore. She has nine lives; not literally—it is a poetical expression for her prosaic hard times. "Every dog has his day, and a cat has two Sundays," is an Essex saying—not hinting that tabby has a double share of homely rest, but that when a dog's "day" is a lifetime, a cat may be said to have nine days, and, counting from the first day of the week, two Sundays. The commentators on folk-lore unearth more than was ever in the country sayings; but so, for that matter, do the commentators on Shakespeare; both are sometimes like a boy digging and lifting on his spade the nondescript articles that tumbled out of his own pocket. To return, not to our muttons, as the French say, but to our cats—did anyone ever see a Cheshire cat grinning except Alice in Wonderland? Here come the commentators again, and say that Cheshire cheeses were once moulded into the shape of cats, with bristles stuck in for whiskers. Alas! this looks like upside-down wisdom. The cheeses must have originated because of the grin, and not the grin because of the cheeses. Others suggest that a sign-painter

once furnished lions rampant to the Cheshire inns, but painted so badly that the lions were mistaken for grinning cats. To show how a saying grows, this one is now stretched in some parts of the country to "grinning like a Cheshire cat chewing gravel." The last words are a rare stimulant to imagining the grin.

Irish cats chew something softer than gravel. They chew the succulent paw-dhogue. We apologise profusely to all Celtic scholars for the spelling of paw-dhogue. It signifies the wick dipped in tallow in the process of candle-making. Though juicy, it is tough, and not to be comfortably chewed without growling. A grumbling person is said to be "like a cat chewing a paw-dhogue." We must dismiss as tradition, with a spice of political meaning, the Kilkenny cats that fought till nothing was left but their tails, and also the Kilkenny battle of the cats of all Ireland, which took place towards the close of the last century. If we delayed over these, we might as well discuss Doldrum and Dildrum. Is the reader curious about Doldrum and Dildrum? He may learn—and take it for a fact, if he likes—that in the south of Lancashire a grave and elderly man was alarmed one evening by a cat, which came down the chimney, and said aloud, "Tell Dildrum, Doldrum is dead," and then went up again. The startled man told his wife as soon as she came into the room with their own harmless, necessary cat; whereupon the harmless, necessary cat, listening, exclaimed, "Is Doldrum dead?" rushed up the chimney, and was never heard of more. The ignorant pair had not known that this intelligent animal's real name was Dildrum, and that it was heir-apparent to the sovereignty of the cats, until then held by Doldrum.

This is hardly more astonishing than the lore we heard in all seriousness from an old countrywoman: "You can always tell when it is going to rain by the cat's eyes; the sight is big and round when the rain is coming, and so narrow you can hardly see it when the weather is fine." So can a trifle like the effect of direct light become exaggerated. It had never been noticed that the change in "the sight" takes place in a few moments.

Another saying is that white cats are deaf. Certainly some are not hard of hearing; and some animals of all colours are slow in coming to call. The most cruel mistake of all is that poor puss is attached to places and not to people; so

she is often left to starve in empty houses, though the attachment to places has been countless times disproved.

Lastly, before closing this section of our subject, another myth faces us. It is that Her Gracious Majesty is prepared to give fifty thousand pounds to anyone who can produce a tortoiseshell tom. This is as true as Doldrum and Dildrum. Tortoiseshell toms are most difficult to obtain, but specimens have sometimes been advertised for sale, and they do not even sell for hundreds, like the "purring piece of tortoiseshell," the cat with the "curious concatenation of colours," in the old ballad of Cateaton Street. But, on the other hand, let not the Isle of Man cats be dismissed as a myth. The island boasts actually a breed of Manx cats above the ordinary size, with long hind-legs and no tail.

To pass on to the badger. This is an animal with the legs on one side longer than on the other. The advantage is, that when he runs

Upon the plain, he halts, but when he runs
On craggy rocks or steepy hills, we see
None runs more swift or easier than he.

Did the seventeenth-century poet ever think what would become of himself if he had to run on craggy rocks and steepy hills with one of his own legs shorter than the other? The belief lingers to our time in the words "as uneven as a badger."

The pig is another remarkable animal.

Pigs can see the wind, 'tis said,
And it seemeth to them red.

Perhaps the colour of the wind was determined by the old name of the "red wind" for the wind that brings rust or blight; but how the pigs see it is beyond tracing. In the un-natural history of pork another fact is, that the marrow in Ireland makes one unable to keep a secret and in England drives one mad. In all swine there are five dark marks on the inside of each fore-leg. These are the "marks of Satan," since the destruction of the herd in the sea.

Bears go downhill backwards. No doubt they go down trees backwards like most animals; and facts expand in empty minds. Exaggerated description, too, feeds this popular science. What would not rustics believe of beavers after hearing the old description of London's penny sights, when Peacham touched off the portrait of

The beaver i' the parke, strange beast as e'er any
man saw,
wne-shearing willowes with teeth as sharp as a
handsaw.

Another origin of wild beliefs is the literal acceptance of figures of speech. A Kentish farmer will say that cattle bought lean and turned into a good field will soon "tumble over their heads." He means, "double their price." Again, when an animal's keep is paid for, it may "eat its own head off." What wonders primitive credulity might make out of the expression!

To pass on to the birds, let us first consider that largest of bipeds, the ostrich, pictured in the popular mind with long neck and legs, curly feathers, and body about as bulky as a four-wheeled cab. There was an old story of the ostrich hatching its eggs by "gazing steadfastly" at them. We have got beyond that now, but not beyond believing in its trick of hiding its head in the desert sand so that its pursuers may not see it. This variety of ostrich, this arrant fool of a bird, is unknown except in un-natural history.

The pelican feeds its young with the life-blood from its own bleeding bosom. This is a beautiful mistake, that will live for ever in symbol and legend. The "real live" pelican has a large bag under her unwieldy beak, and digging with the beak toward the breast, she feeds her brood and soils her feathers with red-stained tit-bits of fish from the bag.

The nightingale leans her breast against a thorn, and sings in pain. In the old poets, not only has she a thorn in her breast, but she puts it there. Instead of being the voice of lonely love, she ought to be the emblem of those discontented people who, in a position enviable to others, first make their own troubles and then spend their lives in self-commiseration. Of course the nightingale is not such a fool as she looks in poetry.

Swans are said to sing a death-song; this is poetry too. But they are hatched during thunder; and this is prose—the belief of otherwise sensible folk. Crows and curlews hate each other so, that their eggs put in the same nest will all burst. Talking of eggs, the cock of the South of England lays an egg when the hen has ceased laying; it is a small insignificant affair with no yolk in it, clearly an amateur attempt. These cock's eggs are to be found in Sussex, if nowhere else. As we have got to the poultry-yard, let Job's turkey have a word; the Americans have the honour of discovering that ill-conditioned bird. They say "as poor as Job's turkey that had to lean against a fence to

gobble," but there we must leave him, as he does not strictly belong to us.

Swans, it may not be generally known, take to the water to hide their ugly feet. Woodcocks were once supposed to migrate to the moon. Geese—at least Lincolnshire geese—are marvellous birds with breast-bones that turn dark before a bad spring season. Cuckoo-spittle covers the summer grass in damp places; the bead of white froth on the grass-tips is called also "brock sweat," from a little green insect, named in country parts the brock; but though the little green insect causes the spot of foam, it is, of course, no more the effect of insect heat than of cuckoo bad habits.

"Nobody never saw a dead rook," rustics will say, "not unless somebody's been and killed un." Probably they evaporate like dead donkeys. Rooks may be seen "tumbling head over heels" before rain; that is, they make a downward flight like tumbler-pigeons. The "snoring" of owls at night is often talked of as the name of their peculiar noise, as if they fell napping in their very time of wakefulness. Against some of the popular names of birds we must likewise protest. In the West of England there are respectable feathered folk called Molly Wash-dishes. This bird is the pied water-wagtail—*Motacilla yarellii*. Bad enough for a hen of such a distinguished family to be called names; but even the cock-bird is Molly Wash-dish too.

Crocodiles no longer lure their victims with tears and eat them sobbing; yet the old libel still exists against the toad, "ugly and venomous." A disagreeable juice exudes from the round raised marks on the toad; but there is no evidence that it is hurtful. Scottish reapers say that in harvest-time "the toad's mouth is shut," and there is no danger—which shows that some of the venom is supposed to come out of its mouth and not from the skin. Another libelled creature is the earwig; yet how many thousands lie on green sward, and whoever found an earwig in his ear? The insect's name has been traced with probability to the Saxon "bud-dweller;" from the Saxon words that make it, we have also the ears of corn and the "wick" in names of towns.

Toads and frogs ought not to exist in Ireland. The song says of St. Patrick: "He gave the frogs and toads a twist, and banished them for ever." Some of them have got back again. In the very poetical folk-lore of Ireland there is a widespread

belief that the frogs are formed of the dew. Toads are not there; but their first cousins, the natter-jacks, are. The grasshoppers of the Green Isle come into the houses when summer is over, and getting smoked brown by the turf-fires, become the crickets of winter. These crickets are dangerous—omnivorous with large appetites; if you kill one, the other crickets will find your wardrobe and eat your clothes. This reminds us of the libel on the moth. People will not yet believe that large ones are harmless. "I must kill that moth before I go to bed," says the young man in the woodcut; "he is as big as a butterfly; if the little ones eat holes in things, that fellow would swallow my new trousers!"

The Scotch adder can suck down the lark out of the sky—"suck the larrack oot o' the lift." Certainly it has been noticed that the lark is not heard where adders are common. An English snake cannot die before the sun sets. This is inconvenient. If you kill one in the woods and bring it to your country lodgings limp and dead, your landlady will reproach you with bringing it in to sting the children, for it is not dead till sunset.

Horse-hairs in water turn into worms. There is a letter of Southey's to his brother, showing that he and Wordsworth were actually made to believe this by some boys who showed them the worms. No doubt the boys believed it too; and the truth underlying it is, that there is found in pools a species of annelides almost as fine as hairs, brown, with darker ends, and much given to wriggling when disturbed. Cow's hairs are as good for the experiment beyond St. George's Channel.

The stag-beetle is pelted to death as "the devil's imp" in Hampshire. The death-watch is another libelled insect. In reality it is only serenading its lady-love when listeners are alarmed; an imitation of the tick made with the finger-nail on wood will set the death-watch going. Again, another libel, "as deaf as a beetle;" the beetle is a wood-splitter's mallet; applied to the animal, the saying matches for wisdom "as mad as a March hare." The French say of a stupid man, "he reasons like an oyster," as if an oyster of ordinary capacity reasons. An American oyster might, such as the mollusc whose story was told to cap the fame of the London whistler—the oyster that a man in the States had, that whistled Yankee Doodle and followed him about the house like a dog.

In ancient days and far away wonders abounded. Travellers told of monstrous creatures as great as Sindbad's roc. Writers of only two centuries ago took up the more picturesque beliefs for figurative illustration, and told of the little ermine dying of grief when its fur is soiled, and the mountain birds turning white in winter through feeding upon snow. But our notes on Popular Un-natural History prove that we need not go far back, nor far from home, to find fabulous animals.

CURIOSITIES OF TRADE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

I HAVE had occasion just lately to look through a large number of the London and Liverpool Bills of Entry, and in trying to find what I wanted, I could not help noticing the many queer articles that are brought into the country. Now a large number of readers will know perfectly well what a bill of entry is. But there must be a great many who are not so well informed, and therefore, for their instruction, let me at once describe it.

This is a daily publication appearing at our chief ports. It contains the names, tonnage, number of hands, port of departure, etc., etc., of all the vessels arriving here the day before, and to each vessel is appended a description of its cargo in detail—a table of contents, in fact. Besides this there is also a list of all goods exported yesterday, with the place of destination, and a variety of shipping information generally. My concern, however, is not with our exports; it is imports alone with which I have to do. It will be understood at once that amongst these there will be seen by the merest inspection a vast quantity of goods whose presence there is a matter of course. Nobody is surprised to find that we receive from the United States, wheat, Indian corn, cattle, dead meat, cotton, petroleum; tea and silk from China; palm-oil from the West Coast of Africa; wine from France, Portugal, and Spain; currants from Greece, and so on. But there are many articles which, though considerable in the aggregate, are of less importance than these. At first sight they seem odd, but are not so in reality when we come to think over the matter. Perhaps some of these items will strike my readers with the same sense of queerness as they did me.

Who would expect, for instance, to find in the cargo of one of the magnificent New

York liners three thousand boxes of clothes-pegs? Yet such an entry is common enough. "Bless my soul!" somebody will say, just as I did when I noticed it, "are we dependent on the States for such things?" Pursuing my investigations further, I found that this was only one out of many of the same kind. It is evident, therefore, that it pays to cut down timber, convert it into the manufactured article, pay carriage to a port, shipping charges, freight, landing charges, carriage to inland towns anywhere in England, commissions to several—a score, for anything I know—intermediaries, in order that the British *materfamilias* may buy a dozen clothes-pegs for three-halfpence, which is what my wife tells me she paid last. I never saw the boxes as imported, but I should imagine they would be large, and hold several hundreds each—thousands, may be.

Does not this give us an idea of the enormous quantity that must be turned out every year in the States? I presume even there the washerwoman is not yet emancipated from the tyranny of the clothes-peg, and this being so, just fancy what a lot must be consumed by fifty millions of people. Yet they are able to supply, not only their internal demand, but to send them to us by the million. Likely enough they will send them as well to some other European countries, though the demand there will not be so great as here, if only from the fact that the weekly wash is not such a national institution.

One cannot help thinking what has been, is, and will be, the effect of this large importation on the home-made article. It is possible from such an insignificant standpoint as the clothes-peg to soar into the highest politico-economic regions. Are our native clothes-peg makers free-traders, or fair-traders; or protectionists, and if so, why so? and if not, why not? I pause for a reply! But none is forthcoming, for I don't know a soul in the trade. If I did I have no doubt he would glow with the fervour of his convictions. But the trade is, I fancy, modest and retiring in its nature; nobody ever hears of its grievances in the House, or through long letters in the Times. And yet the native clothes-peg maker has to live; it must be a serious question with him whether the trade is being driven out of the country by foreign imports, or whether it still defies competition. Perhaps the demand has outstripped his powers of supply, or perhaps

he holds his head up proudly, and asserts boldly that if you want a really first-rate article you must still come to him. Perhaps the trade has quietly died out and made no sign. I should not be surprised to hear this. If my recollection is to be trusted, the present clothes-peg did not make its appearance here till some twenty or twenty-five years ago. Everybody who can look back so far will remember that the clothes-peg to which he was accustomed was evidently a piece of a branch peeled, shaped, cut in two, and then bound together with two or three inches of tin, which were fastened by a bit of wire driven in. Such was what I may term the pre-American, or the antique clothes-peg.

I cannot assert with confidence that this ancient style has disappeared, for I confess that I do not keep my eyes open purposely to study clothes-pegs. But this much may be allowed: the antique is not prominent; possibly it yet lingers in out-of-the-way and old-fashioned places. In the centres of civilisation, however, it is conspicuous by its absence, its place seems to be taken by the modern article. This, as is well-known, is all in a piece, and might be pronounced artistic, were it not evidently made in a machine, and therefore, according to Mr. Ruskin, an utter abomination. How one thought leads to another. To mention a machine makes one wonder whether prices have fallen or advanced, since the American machine-made article came in. Flour is pretty much the same price it was then, beef and mutton, butter and cheese, are dearer, as everybody knows; what has been the effect on clothes-pegs? I don't find them in prices current, yet there must be a market for them somewhere—at Liverpool, I should fancy. If you want the statistics of the trade, where would you go to? The name does not appear in the Board of Trade returns. Can it be that the article is ignominiously classed under wood or sundries? The old Roman in the play could say that nothing that was human was foreign to him. Let me imitate him, and say that nothing commercial is insignificant to me. And yet I must acknowledge that clothes-pegs are not a leading or an important article. The great commoner could awe the House with "Sugar—sugar—sugar, Mr. Speaker," but I am afraid it would have laughed even at him if he had begun "Clothes-pegs—clothes-pegs—clothes-pegs."

It is unnecessary to tell my readers that

America sends us enormous quantities of wood, both in the rough and manufactured. The shapes in which the latter appears are numerous and peculiar at first sight. And here I may as well state that each of my illustrations is but a single instance out of hundreds and thousands similar entries during a year. The same steamer which brings the clothes-pegs carries also two hundred and eighty oars. Just imagine all these piled up against a boat-house; what a lot they would look! And where on earth do they all go to? Whence, too, should we have got them if we had not had the States to go to?

Still keeping to the States and to wood, what do I light upon next? Why, nine hundred and ninety-five maple rollers. What in the world can these be for? Think again, sweet sir; can't you guess? No, I can't. Well, I begin to think that Mr. Puff was right in saying that the number of people who give themselves the trouble of thinking is inconsiderable. Did you ever see a washing and wringing machine? Haven't wringing-machines rollers? Don't you remember, in your youthful days, seeing the process of wringing gone through by the washerwoman, usually assisted by one of the servants, and on blanket-washing occasions, possibly by the whole strength of the establishment? That, as you know very well now, is all done away with; the poorest cottager has a machine, and what used to be a severe strain on the muscles of the arm is now as easy as grinding an organ. Thanks to mechanical inventors, washing-day has been deprived of half its terrors by losing all its trouble."

Thus it will be seen that every one of us over thirty or thereabouts, has witnessed the origin and development of a new branch of industry, and one, moreover, which brings comfort to the poorest of us, a consideration not to be lightly esteemed. To whom occurred the happy thought of using in common life the appliances well known in large industrial establishments we know not, but, whoever he was, he proved himself a benefactor to his species. To go back somewhat, let us suppose the wringing-machine invented, we could not have supplied ourselves with the wood necessary for the rollers. With us sycamore is comparatively scarce, and of considerable value. The price of the rollers alone would have prevented the use of the machine by the working man, or even by the better class. For it must not be supposed that any wood

will do. Certain qualities are required, which sycamore alone combines in itself. It must be fairly close-grained, it must turn well, it must not warp in the transition from hot to cold, or from wet to dry, and it must not wear out quickly. Last, and most important, it must be cheap. Now steps in America. "I can give you all this; the maple, a sister to your sycamore, is perhaps the commonest tree in my northern and middle states, and fulfils all these conditions. Give me your orders, and you shall be well served, and therefore well satisfied." Hence the trade. After this disquisition, nobody will be surprised to hear that the next entry is fifty-six casks of handles. Wood again. Washing-machines, of course, need wooden handles, and innumerable other things want them as well. Here is an outlet for the smaller pieces—we shall see that every part of the tree is used to advantage. Short lengths, which are unfit for large work, such as rollers, can be converted into good-sized handles at any rate.

All of us know that "wooden head" is a term of reproach applied to human beings. It may be thought that we have already quite enough of them in the country, and the arrival of four thousand four hundred and eighty-two from America will be hailed with anything but satisfaction. But there is no occasion to grumble, on the contrary, for this consignment is merely intended to supply casks with heads. But this is not all. If we get heads from America, why not get staves as well? We do. One steamer from New Orleans brings us, amongst other goods, an assorted lot, comprising seventeen thousand seven hundred and ten pieces pipe, two thousand nine hundred and fifty-five pieces hogshead, three thousand five hundred and eighty pieces claret, four thousand one hundred and seventy-eight pieces barrel, and ten thousand seven hundred and thirteen pieces keg staves. Each of these five descriptions is of a different size from the others, cut to a regulation length, breadth, and thickness. The trouble of the English cooper is reduced to a minimum; if he has orders for pipes, hogsheads, or kegs, he chooses from his stock, bought in Liverpool, the requisite number of staves, which are already of the right size in every respect, and the proper number of head-pieces, which are also cut to certain well known lengths. He has simply to put the whole together, and fasten on his iron hoops. For these last we need not say he has not to go abroad.

But if it is necessary that his casks be bound with wooden hoops, for these he is to a great measure dependent on the foreigner. Enormous quantities arrive every week from Rotterdam; such an entry as nine hundred and forty bundles is of almost daily occurrence at London or Liverpool. Staves and heads form a very large article of export from almost all the North American ports from New York to New Orleans.

Charleston is best known to Englishmen as the great cotton-port; but it also holds high rank as an exporter of timber, in the shape of staves and trenails. Perhaps it may be as well to say that the latter are what may be described as large wooden nails, used in many operations of carpentry. Anyone who has ever seen a ship building must have noticed the big wooden nails projecting all round the hull. For such purposes a wood is wanted which must above everything be tough, and this quality is found to perfection in the locust-tree which flourishes abundantly in the Carolinas. We find in one steamer fifteen thousand locust trenails.

Does not everyone remember a few years ago how the British joiner was going to be ruined by the importation of doors, window-frames, and what not from Sweden and Norway. The native artisan, however, has gone on since then in pretty much the same way as before, and his trade is by no means extinct. One gets used in time to these lamentations, especially when one recollects that a great many men still living have known the whole country going to be ruined more than once. The import of manufactured wood from the Scandinavian ports is not yet at an end, and is further supplemented from a source still farther off. We find a New York steamer bringing two thousand five hundred and forty-seven doors. Another New York steamer carries ninety-four cases of spokes, and two cases of hubs—material here for a good many waggons or carriages, as the case may be. But my feeling is, that after the clothes-pegs, there is no room for surprise at anything, and, therefore, an entry of four cases of umbrella-sticks from Philadelphia passes almost unnoticed; simple enough from all their wealth of wood to choose the best-looking branches, and send them over to us. Bobbins, too, thirty cases of these create no surprise; but stay, what is the next item that catches the eye? Why, four cases of mousetraps. These must be some Yankee

notion, the latest patent, warranted to contain one or more victims every morning. We are dimly conscious of having seen in a shop-window somewhere a mousetrap all wood, into which no mouse could avoid falling, and out of which it could not possibly get; perhaps this was one of the lot, per British Prince, from Philadelphia. There must surely be in these some superiority of design or execution, or, however could it pay to send them so many thousand miles? One would think it would be impossible to compete with the home-maker in an article which is made from all sorts of odds and ends. Of course the States have also their odds and ends, and the mousetraps are a pretty good proof that they make the most of them. But there remains still an entry to show to what an extent they try to turn everything to advantage. What do you think of fifty-six barrels of skewers? Barrels, of course, mean flour-barrels; only imagine fifty-six of these full of skewers. Let me see, what are skewers used for? Oh, fowls are trussed with them, and only yesterday I had to utter an anathema on the cook for leaving one in. Butchers, though, must be the great consumers; don't we see in the shops sheep stuck all over with them? And that reminds me that many years ago some ingenious gentleman wrote to Notes and Queries to point out that Shakespeare was probably a butcher, or at any rate was well up in the technicalities of the trade, as he appears to have been with every other trade, on the strength of his having written:

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will.

And to shape the ends is still the correct expression for the butcher-boy when making his skewers. I wonder if butchers still make their own skewers? Hardly, I should think, in large houses where they can buy them ready made, or be waited on by salesmen eager for orders. Depend upon it, the butcher of to-day adapts himself to the improved conditions of the times, and looks upon the days when he made his own skewers as we all look upon the times when there were no railways. Such is the march of progress. The butcher-boy no longer has his soul vexed at the thought that when he has carried out all the meat, and cleaned the blocks, and swept up, the remaining hours will be employed in whittling out skewers for the morrow. Happy boy! he

has nothing to do with skewers except use them, and if he knew where they came from he would bless America.

It will be difficult to imagine anything brought into the country much more insignificant than skewers, unless it were shavings, and I must say that I have not yet found that we import these. But I have found that we import large quantities of firewood, and from the form of the entry, I should not be surprised to learn that it comes in ready cut for use—chips, in fact. Entries such as forty fathoms firewood are common enough in the London Bill of Entry. This, however, does not travel so far as the skewers, it comes to us from Norway, and gives us an idea of the value we must be to our Scandinavian cousins, who thus find a ready market for what is rubbish to them. There they are wondering what on earth to do with their odd bits, here we are crying out for something to light our fires with. Somehow or other the two are brought together, and a further link welded in the chain of commerce, which brings all nations closer together. As everybody has heard of the enormous pine-forests in Norway and Sweden, we expect to find large quantities coming in, in all sorts of shapes. We are all acquainted with the Swedish matches, which are to be found everywhere. These, however, are not made from fir, but from the aspen, also a very common tree. One vessel from Gothenburg brings forty-one thousand nine hundred and thirteen props, nine thousand three hundred and forty poles, and one hundred and ninety-seven thousand eight hundred and sixty-six fir-staves. The first of these may cause surprise to many, but to those who are acquainted with the coal districts, it is a matter of course; they are used in enormous quantities for props in coal-pits. As to the next, one has only to think of building operations and scaffolding-poles, and there is no mystery in the matter. From Gothenburg also a vessel brings twenty-three thousand four hundred and thirty-six bundles of laths, and Frederickstadt sends us thirty-nine thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven pieces of flooring-boards. If any of my readers, therefore, wants to build, he will have a good idea where his timber comes from, but if he wants to fence his garden or his park, he must go farther, for I find part of a cargo from St. John's, New Brunswick, to consist of six thousand nine hundred and forty pieces of palings.

So far I am content to mention the commonest wood and wooden articles we import. It is unnecessary to do more than state the fact that of furniture, ornamental and dye woods, large quantities arrive from abroad. There is, however, no novelty or oddity in these. But there is an often-recurring entry which at first sight struck me as peculiar; the first one I met with was three hundred and forty-six empty casks from Alexandria, these, of course, might have held anything. But my suspicions were confirmed by the next entry, which was one hundred and eighty-nine hogsheds, one hundred and twelve barrels, and five hundred and fifteen kilderkins from Malta, consigned to Bass, Allsopp, and Worthington. There could be no possible mistake, they were empty beer-barrels, and these we know are to be found wherever Englishmen do congregate. An odd-looking entry, too, was fourteen casks of empty bottles, from Alexandria, consigned to J. Schweppe and Co. Nobody need be told what these were. It used to be said in the old overland route days that the path across Egypt could be traced by the soda-water corks lying about. Whatever may be done with the corks, the bottles at any rate get returned. One can fancy the Egyptian boy, in his leisure hours, amusing himself by prowling along the Canal looking out for empties.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

THE health-giving breezes that blow about the Malvern Hills have long been famous. As the old rhyme has it,

All about the Malvern Hill
A man may live as long as he will,

and no doubt a woman also. For Malvern Hills and the district round about has been rather noted for old women, many of whom were supposed to enjoy a power and influence that had their origin in Satanic arts. Even as late as the eighteenth century, many reputed witches could have been pointed out, and many a stout Worcestershire squire could tell the story of his dogs chasing a black cat, in which he recognised a neighbouring dame of his acquaintance.

But Malvern, with its suddenly developed greatness in the way of hotels, water-cure establishments, and boarding-houses, has, no doubt, forgotten its ancient superstitions. The old ladies find it more profitable now

to let lodgings, and wear out their brooms in lawful domestic occupations, instead of in traversing the fields of air. But there is still a weird, uncanny feeling to be had in exploring the ancient camps and deserted trackways that mark the lonely summits of the hills; summits from which a grand panorama is spread before the gazer's eye—the lovely valleys of the Severn and the Wye, and the spires and towers of three cathedral cities. Everywhere rich and well-cultivated Worcestershire is spread like a map at our feet—parks and woodlands, meadows, hop-gardens, and orchards, all blended into a deep glow of mingled light and shadow.

From Malvern the highway brings us to Upton-on-Severn, with its bridge over the river, which recalls many a tough skirmish for its possession—not the actually existing bridge, but its immediate predecessor—during the civil wars. Over Upton Bridge galloped in wild panic the Parliamentary troopers when they first came in contact with Rupert's Horse—a sort of Bull's Run for the Puritan party, the memory of which was to be wiped out hereafter in many a well-fought fight. And a different scene it was truly, although some of the actors might have been the same, when a handful of dismounted men crept on hands and knees, and throwing themselves into the church, sustained the attack of the whole Royalist division till the bridge could be hastily repaired, and the main body pass over. This was on the eve of Worcester fight, and had a material influence on the fortunes of that day.

On the other side of the Severn lies Croome d'Abitot, with its hall and park, the seat of the Coventrys; and the name of the place recalls the first Norman earl of the county, cruel Urso, "God's curse," as he was called by his own countryman and bishop. And Urso, probably, came from Yvetôt, in Upper Normandy, the seat of the comical little kingdom celebrated by Beranger, where the name of a neighbouring village, Ourville, suggests the family-name of our disagreeable earl. For the original Urso had, no doubt, been some savage Danish viking who had plagued the peasants of Normandy, as his descendant plagued the hinds who dwelt by Severn shore. And here is something to testify to the hereditary transmission of qualities, for no ruder or more ferocious freebooter than he settled as a curse upon the English land. The family came to an end in the next generation in an heiress, who married a

Beauchamp, and thus laid the foundation of the future greatness of the Earls of Warwick, whose emblem, the bear and ragged staff, may, perhaps, have some reference to the original founder of their fortunes.

But even more powerful lords of the soil, and certainly more civilised and beneficent, were the Benedictines, with their splendid quadrilateral of abbeys, Pershore, Evesham, and Worcester, with Tewkesbury just beyond the county border, but owning many rich lordships in its limits. Altogether more than a third of the county was under the rule of these stately foundations. And thus, what with the enormous possessions of the house of Warwick and the Benedictines, there was little room for other families to acquire great influence in the county. And in spite of the forfeiture incurred by the King-maker, and the evil fate of his family, the property was kept together till Henry the Seventh finally swept it up into the hands of the crown. Thus nearly all the families of distinction in Worcestershire at the time of the civil wars, were in origin new men, descendants of court officials and court favourites, enriched by the lavish hands of monarchs, at the expense of the crown domains.

Naturally enough, what with gratitude and expectancy, the royal cause was strong in Worcestershire, and when the civil wars broke out, the city of Worcester was one of the few municipal centres that went heartily for the King's cause, and earnt for itself the title of the faithful city. Its citizens had suffered heavily for their devotion to the King, and endured a four months' siege before they finally surrendered to the Parliament. Two years had elapsed, during which the Puritan interest had been supreme, and still at the news that a royal army was once more in the field, and advancing from the north to assert the sovereignty of King Charles the Second, the mayor and chief citizens were ready to welcome the invading force, even though it was largely composed of Scots and Presbyterians.

For nearly a year Cromwell and Charles had confronted each other, the latter so strongly posted, with Stirling Castle as the centre of his position, that Cromwell did not venture to attack him, but was obliged to content himself with holding in a stern grip all the country between Firth and Clyde. Tired at last of this inaction, Cromwell drew in his force upon Edinburgh, made a bold dash across the Forth with the bulk of his

army, establishing himself upon the northern bank of the estuary, and crushing in the left flank of the Royalists, but also leaving open the road to the south. In making this movement, Cromwell seems to have underrated his adversary's enterprise, for Charles, seizing the opportunity, broke up his camp and boldly struck for the crown of England. The Scotch army crossed the border at Carlisle, and marching through Lancashire, carried Warrington Bridge, which was held by a handful of determined Cromwellites, and so by Shrewsbury to Worcester.

All this produced a considerable scare among the friends of the Parliament, who were disposed to bitterly reproach their general for letting loose this scourge upon them. But the citizens of London were staunch to the popular cause. Charles's proclamation was publicly burnt, and hasty preparations were made for defence. But Charles had by this time experienced the usual defect of his Scotch levies, who dragged at each remove a lengthening chain, and whose courage declined in exact proportion to their distance from home. And thus a halt was called at Worcester, where it was hoped that all who had the royal cause at heart would hasten to join the royal standard.

Many of the neighbouring gentry answered this appeal to arms, and Charles, who lay encamped, with some ten thousand Scots, about Worcester and along the western bank of the Severn, as far as Upton, was joined by two thousand English Cavaliers. But Cromwell was marching by the western route in hot pursuit, with nearly thirty thousand men, mostly war-trained veterans, whom their leader had moulded into the finest army of the age. Through Stratford, Evesham, and Pershore, the great captain swooped down upon his adversary. The iron net was soon cast about the royal army. The bridge at Upton was seized and repaired, and the Royalists driven into their lines at Worcester, and presently a bridge of boats over the Teme, where it joins the Severn, and over the Severn itself, within a pistol-shot of the other, united the two parts of the Parliamentary army. Cromwell himself, threatening the city itself, raised a battery of great guns at a point which commanded the one strong redoubt which defended the Royalist position, and which would soon become untenable.

At night the Royalists held council.

Without any great captain among them, and with an army vastly inferior in discipline to that opposed to it, they had, nevertheless, in their ranks thousands of brave and doughty soldiers. The leading Cavaliers, too, recking little of tactics or strategy, had their heads full of artifices of war, and cunning stratagems for taking or relieving forts and garrisons. What promised better than to sally forth this night with fifteen hundred stout fellows, well armed, with white shirts over their corsets, and in a vigorous camisado cut their way to the very tent of Sultan Oliver and slay him among his janissaries, and thus finish the war at a blow? This notion was hailed with enthusiasm; there were plenty of volunteers among the young English Cavaliers; but they talked too loudly and too long, and one William Guise, a shoemaker or tailor, overheard the plot, and contrived to warn the Parliamentary outposts. Thus the Royalists found their enemies prepared for them, and were driven back with some loss and little credit, and had to content themselves with wreaking vengeance on poor Guise, who was hung in Worcester market-place next morning.

With the morning the prospects of the Royalists were very gloomy. The heights about the city were crowned by the enemy's batteries, and in the western suburbs, where the attack was becoming warm, the Scotch troops, almost demoralised, were throwing down their arms. Charles, himself, watched the progress of the attack from the high cathedral tower, and judging from the hearty way in which the enemy attacked on the west, that the bulk of the Parliamentary forces were there engaged, he determined to lead out his forces in person, and attack the right wing of the enemy. With the King at their head the infantry of the royal army made a spirited attack upon Cromwell's batteries, and for a moment the attack was successful, the guns were captured, and the array of the enemy was broken. But Cromwell bringing forward his supports soon retrieved the battle, and presently the Royalists were flying pell-mell for the city, with Cromwell's men in hot pursuit. Charles had been dismounted in the struggle, and, borne away by the press of fugitives, was nearly killed or captured in the city gateway, where, as it happened, a waggon-load of hay, abandoned in the confusion, choked the passage alike for friends and foes. Charles, however, was drawn by friendly hands under the wheels of the waggon,

and presently, in all the tumult and confusion of the scene, the cry was raised through the streets of the city, "A horse to mount the King!" The appeal was answered by a loyal gentleman bringing forth a good horse ready bridled and saddled, and Charles, once more mounted, made a last and futile attempt to rally his men, and even appealed to them to shoot him rather than leave him to his miserable fate. All this time the Scotch horse under Leslie had not even been engaged, and they rode out of the town by the north gate in good order. Charles was urged to ride away in their midst, but instead, galloped away towards the west, glad, perhaps, to be free of his Scotch friends at any cost. Charles's escape by Boscobel has already been chronicled. The fugitive troops were less fortunate. Few of them reached the Scotch borders; for they soon lost military cohesion, and dispersing, fell an easy prey to the exasperated peasantry, who knocked on the head, without mercy, any helpless stragglers.

It is gravely told by a Royalist divine, that on the morn before Worcester fight, Cromwell ensured success by a compact with the Evil One, who granted him a seven years' lease of prosperity under, it is to be presumed, the usual terms. If it could be shown that the story was told during Cromwell's life, the coincidence would be curious, as the Lord Protector actually expired on that day seven years from the anniversary of Worcester fight. But it was also said that Oliver had been overreached in a very unfair manner, having stipulated for twenty-one years, or at least fourteen, but that the Evil One had basely altered the figures. "But what could have been his Satanic Majesty's motive in that?" enquired a steady believer in the supernatural and in the divine right of the Stuarts, of a learned but less orthodox friend. "He was in a hurry for the Restoration, no doubt," was the rather apt reply.

But what strikes one most in the memories of Worcester fight is the unexpected savagery of the peasantry. Honest Giles and Ned, kindly, slow-witted fellows, you might suppose, turned with the fury of a *Jacquerie* upon fellow-creatures who could not have done them individually much harm. After all, perhaps, we have here only a survival of the hatred of the Scot; a hatred that sometimes showed itself in stripping the skin off a dead Scot and nailing it to the church door. As at Durham, so even as far south

as Worcester, there are evidences of this practice. Tradition had it that the wooden doors of the cathedral were covered with Danes' skins. And curiously enough, not many years since, there were still remaining fragments of the ancient upholstery, preserved beneath the bars and stanchions of the ancient wooden doors of Worcester Cathedral. And these fragments were pronounced by no less an authority than Professor Queckett to have been revealed under the microscope as undoubtedly human, and of a fair, light-haired type.

Except for its cathedral, Worcester has not much to show in the way of relics of antiquity; but the tomb of an English king, even of such a worthless king as John, according to general repute, is something for the city to be proud of. But it is as the centre of a rich, fruitful district, with hop-yards, cherry-orchards, and pear-orchards—the apple is less grown than in Herefordshire—that Worcester flourishes in its pleasant, quiet fashion. Autumn brings the hop-pickers in long processions of country carts. Many of the pickers are dark, swarthy metal-workers from about Stourbridge and Halesowen, a race distinct and strange among the Saxon type of Worcestershire men, and with a distinct name, the Lye-wasters, marking a people who, men and women both, skilful at the hammer and forge, mingle little and seldom intermarry with the surrounding population.

Worcester itself has a considerable population of craftsmen, but these of the more delicate sort—makers of lace and gloves, of glass and porcelain, drawn from all parts of the kingdom, and on the whole prosperous and well paid. The china works, known over all the world, were founded in 1751 by one Dr. Wall, a famous chemist of the day, to whose skill is said to be due the composition of that frit body which made the early Worcester porcelain so excellent. No doubt many of the earliest workmen came from Bow, where china works had already been in existence for twenty or thirty years. In the following year, 1752, *The Gentleman's Magazine* notifies that "a sale of this manufacture will be given at the music meeting . . . 'tis said, at a moderate price." Eleven years later were issued those curious two shilling and one shilling tokens in porcelain which are now prized by collectors. But in no other way could the Worcester Company be said to have made money, and in 1772 the company was

reconstituted, and opened show-rooms in Gough Square, Fleet Street, close to where Dr. Johnson resided for many years. In 1783 the works were purchased by Flight from Hackney—probably connected with the old Bow manufactory. A few years after, a rival establishment—Chamberlain's—began operations, and against the royal visits paid to Flight, could set off a visit from the hero of the Nile, maimed and battered, with the beautiful Lady Hamilton leaning on his one sound arm. The result was a lavish order from the impulsive admiral, which was not finally completed when the battle of Trafalgar ended our hero's career. Many years after, in 1840, the two firms united, and the manufacture is still carried on by a joint stock company.

As a musical centre, Worcester can also boast of a long history. As early as 1724, the choirs of the three cathedrals had been in the habit of meeting yearly for practice in an informal, friendly way. From that date the meeting of the three choirs was made the occasion for a collection for clergy orphans, the result being some thirty pounds for the first year; and soon the yearly meeting became an event looked forward to and calculated upon by the musical world.

A few miles below Worcester the pleasant river Teme joins the Severn, at a point where Cromwell built his bridges of boats, as may be remembered. And the Teme, before it loses itself in the Severn, has passed through a pleasant country, flowing through a break in the hill ridge, that, as a spur of the Malvern Hills, runs northwards to Abberley; and below Abberley Hill lies the Hundred House, an inn, still the meeting-place of magistrates, which recalls the time when the men of the hundred met on the hill above in arms, while the camp on the hill may have seen the assemblage of all the county muster for the Welsh wars. In ancient days no doubt the hill overlooked the borders of a great forest, of which a fragment now remains on the northern border of the county, the great forest of Wyre, which probably gave its name to the city Wireceaster, and hence to the county of Worcester. In the midst of this former forest lies Bewdley on the Severn, once a royal manor with a palace, some time occupied by Prince Arthur as a hunting-seat—the Prince Arthur who might have saved us from Henry the Eighth, but who, unhappily, died in his youth.

Beyond Bewdley lies Kidderminster, with its fine church towering above the homes of the carpet-weavers. And here we begin to be drawn into the circle of smoke and iron, where Stourbridge flourishes, among foundries and glassworks, the latter industry said to have been introduced by refugees from Hungary and Lorraine, in the middle of the sixteenth century. And over the smoky region of coal and iron, Dudley Castle seems to hold a kind of feudal pre-eminence, claiming its share in all the wealth that is hewn out by swart miners from the bowels of the earth.

But from rural Worcestershire this industrial region is divided by the ridge of the Lickey Hills, with Hagley lying on their northern flank—the home of the Lyttletons—the British Tempe, according to Thomson, and

The hall in whose kind haunt
The hospitable genius lingers still—

a square and solid mansion, that has been a Castle of Indolence for generations of poets. The Lyttletons themselves have been a literary race, with something of a fateful, melancholy nature, that shows itself now and then in the family annals. The story of the white dove that heralds a death in the family, and of strange pre-sentiments strangely realised, will be familiar to most students of the night side of nature.

Close by Hagley is Clent, once known as Cowdale, a happy valley among the hills, but with legends hanging about it of battle and slaughter, of which no historic record has survived. Here, too, if we may believe the old chroniclers, was Keneth murdered—the boy-king of the Mercians, at the instigation of his sisters.

At the foot of the Lickey Hills, on the old salt way from Droitwich, lies the ancient but decayed borough of Bromsgrove, with its colony of nailers, while, still under the shadow of the hills, is Redditch, where, under some subtle influence of surrounding conditions, the sturdy nail-makers are replaced by the neat-handed fashioners of needles and fish-hooks, and other delicate implements of sport and industry. We may follow the salt way to its ancient origin at Droitwich, where the brine-springs have continued to flow unexhausted from the days of the ancient Britons. The "wych" in the name denotes that the Saxons made use of the springs, and the "Droit" may denote the tax that the Norman kings imposed upon its produce—at any rate, we know of no better

derivation. But the salt-stream has also left its record in Salwarp, a village close by, and in the brook of the same name that flows into Severn stream.

A little more to the westward the streams begin to flow into the classic Avon, Shakespeare's Avon, and here, in a bend of the same river, lies Evesham, with the ruins of its old Benedictine abbey, that witnessed one of the most stirring battles of mediæval times. Ancient as is the foundation of Evesham, going back to the Saxon king, Ethelred, who gave the site to the monks, it is still, if popular tradition is to be credited, quite distanced in antiquity by a neighbouring village.

There was a church at Honeybourne,
When Evesham was but bush and thorne.

And it was from Honeybourne, doubtless, that the swineherd, Eofes, drove his pigs when he met that vision in the woods of the fair and shining form, that bade him mark the spot, that there a shrine might be raised to the honour of the Virgin. Eofes, perhaps, was a wealthy man, and able, like the swineherd of Lincoln, to give substantial help to the new foundation, perhaps helped with his own hands to raise the rude framework of the wooden church, and the wattled and plastered home of the infant colony. The grand Norman masonry that had risen on the site of the Saxon monastery was yet in its first sharp outline of newness, when the great event of its annals came to pass. Looking at its site, almost encompassed by the smiling but deceitful river, with its fertile soil and white-blossomed orchards, you would pronounce it a famous site for a colony of studious recluses, but a terrible death-trap for an army.

And a trap it was, in which was caught stout Simon de Montfort, whom competent authorities have pronounced the father of our English liberties. And yet the Earl was a wise and wary leader, the best soldier of his day; but that day was now past, and he was in the presence of a born warrior, a swift and sudden enemy, the future conqueror of the Welsh and the Scots. We have already witnessed Prince Edward's escape from his lax captivity at Hereford, and since then, with the aid of the Earl of Gloucester and Roger Mortimer, he had raised the men of the west to such purpose that Simon found himself surrounded almost and hemmed in at Hereford, where the Prince and his friends had been amusing him with insincere negotiations. Simon, however, had dispatched his son, the

younger Simon, to the south to raise the King's tenants, and meet his father, with all the power he could muster, at Kenilworth.

Kenilworth, where we now see the ruins of the stately mansion of the Dudleys, was then a great military fortress, garrisoned and provisioned by the prudent Earl as a place of arms and camp of refuge. And thus, while feigning an attack upon his enemies in front of Hereford, the Earl had secretly resolved upon a sudden flank march to the eastward, to join his son under the walls of Kenilworth. But the Prince had already been beforehand with him. Well-informed by traitors of all that went on in the Earl's camp, the Prince had divined his plan, and with matchless celerity darted upon Kenilworth with a handful of chosen troops, surprised the careless young Simon, who, deeming his enemy fifty miles away, had encamped in careless security without the walls of the fortress, and scattered the recent levies in hopeless flight. Edward was back again and watching Earl Simon before the latter broke up his camp; but once on the move the old soldier timed his march so well, that he almost outstripped the Prince, who was marching on a parallel line to the northwards.

At Evesham, however, there was fatal delay. Simon was encumbered by the presence of the king, Henry the Third, who, it is likely enough, had received his cue from the Prince to delay the march by every possible means. And thus, on approaching the stately abbey, within hearing of the sweet bells and the song of the monks, Henry commanded a halt, and proposed to hear a mass and dine with the abbot before proceeding farther. The Earl, it must be remembered, was entirely ignorant of the blow that had been dealt his son. He was almost within reach of his own strong castle, and he felt sure of being able to cut his way through any army that might oppose him, for his force, though small, was composed of the élite of the baronage of England, with their immediate followers. There is an old saying, existent probably in the days of Sir Simon the Righteous, that prayer and feasting hinder no man's journey, and possibly this old saw may have turned the scale. Anyhow, the little army marched over Bengeworth Bridge, and encamped upon the pleasant meadows lying about the abbey. There was a great feast that afternoon in the abbey refectory;

but while the barons were feasting, Prince Edward had come up by forced marches, and crossing the River Avon at Cleve, threw himself upon the only practicable road to Kenilworth. Then finding that he had outstripped his foe, the Prince drew his army back, recrossing the river at Offenham, and taking up a position on the high ground at the neck of the isthmus of Evesham. At the same time Roger Mortimer, who with his lances had followed by a different route, took possession of the bridge at Bengeworth at nightfall, and thus the old Earl was fairly within the toils.

At the first dawn of morning the Earl was aroused with the intelligence that there was a strong force in his front; it was thought that his son had arrived, for the banner of the De Montforts could be made out among the press of knightly pennons. But, alas! it was soon evident that the banner was insultingly flaunted as a trophy in the hands of his enemies. Then the Earl knew that all was at an end. "Heaven keep our souls," he cried, "for our bodies belong to our enemies!" But the brave old Earl did not wait for the attack; he charged with his friends up the hill, and was slain in the fight, as tradition says, near the well or spring that still bears the name of Battle Well. The King, who was led unwillingly enough into the fight, narrowly escaped a fatal blow in the *melée*, and when he was recognised, and taken to a place of safety, an indiscriminate slaughter began. Some of the noblest blood of England enriched the fields of Evesham that day, and the carnage was continued even into the sacred precincts of the abbey, and the church itself desecrated by human slaughter. As for the rout of common men, their bodies choked the stream of Avon, it is said, and the place where they vainly tried to cross is called Dead Man's Ait to this day.

"SEE NAPLES, AND DIE."

I LODGED at the Bristol, that hotel palace which crowns the rocky heights over Naples, placed on the stately parade of the New Corso Vittorio Emanuele, the ramparts of the Castle of St. Elmo behind. The glories of earth and sea lie beneath, and all the wonders thereof around. I look upon them when I wake; I take them with me to rest, as a dream, under the pale moon. Colour, form, sweet

scents, and musical sounds—all are here ; and creature-comforts, too, in a magnificent establishment where, if Nature, in her loveliest mood, greets me without, plenty and splendour are prepared within.

Whichever way you take the Hotel Bristol, it is a palace. The saloons glisten with carving and gold, the hangings rustle with brocade. There are blue rooms, and red rooms, and terra-cotta rooms, and rooms running through the whole gamut of colour. A golden glamour in them all—on couches, chairs, and consoles. The great mirrors are encased in gold ; the frescoed ceilings—supported by chased gold borders, candelabras, and girandoles—gold, and the rest en suite. The bedrooms are in pale pink satins and dove-colour, bordered and edged with gold ; the retiring-rooms and boudoirs hung with amber, or painted in landscape-frescoes and wreaths of fruit and flowers. And there are the most delightful brass-bedsteads—an article for which Naples has a specialty. I never saw so many bedsteads in my life, as in Easter-week ranged along the street of the Toledo. The hotel is empty now, and the furniture enveloped, like a weary beauty out of the season, in dressing-gowns of embroidered muslin—for it is May, and the foreigners are gone, save a few, of whom I am one—but for all that it is a treat to wander from floor to floor, it suits so well with the soft creamy air, and the feeling of living in a legend or a dream.

Looking across the waters, quivering in fields of light, a longing comes over me to fly like a bird, or to leap into that turquoise sea, and float onwards for ever on those azure waves that wash the shore with foam. All sorts of odd sensations assail me, as I stand there, for I am drunk with beauty. It goes to my very brain. How vain are pen and brush to paint it ! A scene that never can be old, but day by day comes to me invested with fresh youth and ever-present joy that Nature is so fair, and I am here to see it !

There is the blue-green point of Paullippo piercing the dancing waves, alive with dark woods, white villas, gardens, towers, terraces—an architectural pot-pourri, incongruous but sweet, the undulating lines running upwards from the blue sea as if in haste, in a race of beauty, towards the rustic Pomero—a mountain confusion of pines, vineyards, ilex-thickets, olives, and gardens, out of which rise pre-eminent the Certosa of San Martino, and the dark-walled Castle of San Elmo.

The bay proper is lined with buildings, as many-coloured as Joseph's coat, over which rises Vesuvius, an insignificant mountain in itself, but weird and impressive from that curtain of dense smoke that lies lurid on the plain, and those fire-sparks and flames waking the dulness of the night.

Castellamare, a white drapery, lies opposite, towards which the towns of Portici, Torre del Greco, and Pompeii run in a continuous line of houses and villas all along the sea. Behind, in a blue mist, the sweetly-lined mountains of Sant Angelo tower over that heavenly-wooded nook, wrapt in eternal shade, called "Qui si sana;" the promontory of Sorrento stretches beyond, backed by rocky ranges, where brigands still linger ; and, shooting upwards from the dancing waves, the purple peaks of Capri, all bristling with precipices and points, sheer out of mysterious shadows of sea-caves and grottoes. Be it under the pale moon, or in the ardent sunshine of a burning noon, veiled by silvery mists, or blazing in the full splendour of an amaranthan sunset, the actual present is always the best because it is perfect, and all is perfect through every change.

Naples itself is but an accident in a vast panorama—a glowing episode full of life and colour. There is no special charm in Naples, save that the great tinted blocks of houses seem to fit in with the people who live in them, being both gay, and garish, and trivial. But that they might be better architected, and less like great coloured trunks, no one can deny.

Nothing could be too fanciful or fantastic for a place where everyday life rhymes itself into a poem, with a wild rhythm in verse.

I see myself lazily looking down on peristyles of Grecian temples, colonnades, baths, and palaces, wreathed with fruit and flowers ; I see pillared walks of state trod by a glittering crowd, under the glory of palms and frescoed walls ; I see the gloom of sacred woods, enshrouding dread sanctuaries ; the blaze of perennial blossoms circling tutelary shrines. I see the great ocean washing the marble shore on which tread gods. I hear the murmur of fountains and the rush of full cascades. The star of the white virgin-lily blending with my dreams ; the ruddy red of the oleander twining with the rose ; the feathery crowns of palm-trees, and a sky canopied all, clear as if cut from an opal.

Any phantasy fits in with what I see from

the hotel balcony—composes, as painters say, to suit the wildest sketch. But all this did not suffice me. I must explore the Bay of Baia, shrouded from sight by the high-running capes of Pozzuoli and Pausilippo—the Bay of Baia, which means the curving coast-line extending to Misenum, and the dolomitic heights of ill-fated Ischia, the ruins of Grecian Cumæ, Lake Avernus, and all those classic sites Virgil can tell of.

The morning was lovely—a crystal sea, a tender blue haze enveloping the highlands of Capri and the dark promontory of Sorrento, just the tips of the mountains emerging; and point after point of wooded headland stretching out to kiss the waves; a still, quiet air, laden with the perfume of mignonette and orange-flowers, violets and jasmine—sea, sky, and earth tranquil under the sun.

With a heart full of joy I rattle down the hill from the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, threading its many curves until I reach the farther end of the Chiaja and the Fontana di Leone—the only drinkable water in the whole city of Naples—the margin crowded with men, donkeys, mules, carts, barrels, jugs, amphora-girls, bare-headed crones with no hair, beggars, and stray yelping dogs.

Leaving all this turmoil behind, I dash into the darkness of the tunnel of Pausilippo, lighted by scanty lamps quivering before Madonna-shrines, all poetry, for the moment, knocked out of me by the agglomeration of horrid smells, among which I hail the stink of petroleum as at least healthy and of clear repute, among the nameless abominations which meet my nose.

Now daylight again, and ardent sun, and the long, white, aspen-bordered road to Fuori Grotta, like a ribbon beside the shore, each curve opening into vistas of new interest, until eye and mind droop bewildered.

The most interesting drive in the whole world, every object a memory. A heap of stones, once a Roman villa; a few broken arches, an imperial aqueduct; a group of dark architectural masses, of piled-up pillars, against which the sea-surf breaks, the attempted bridge across the bay from Pozzuoli to Misenum, begun by that brutal madcap, Caligula; every hill honeycombed with what were once classic villas, marble baths, dungeons, or subterranean chambers; great hollows dried up, once lakes teeming with tropical richness; the arid range

of the Solfatara and Monte Movo, altogether of lava, covering with volcanic death a fair region, blossoming in classic days with life and beauty; ruined walls, once pagan temples, glaring out of rocky rifts; the spacious amphitheatre of Pozzuoli frowning on a barren hillside, now a crumbling ruin, through which the fierce sun slants; ancient sculptured frontals degraded into squalid huts; the oozing mud of the Lucrine and Avernus lakes—once sylvan wood-seats—full of noisome exhalations; poverty, misery, and ruin everywhere stamped on the desolate shores of this once laughing Campagna—a wreck, an earthly corpse, upon which time, war, and volcanoes have set their mark.

The city of Pozzuoli, bathed in the waters of the Bay of Baia—the first Cumæan colony, and famous in the Second Punic War, as fortified by Fabius to oppose Hannibal, the scene of Sylla's debaucheries and miserable death; Cicero's "Pusilla Roma," Nero's "Augusta," Vespasian's "Flavia;" in old times a place of extensive commerce with Asia Minor and Egypt, frequented by the haughty patricians, assembled to riot or to bathe in the enervating atmosphere; its elegant temples dedicated to Augustus, adorned with arcades of white marble and senatorial statues, and its shrine to Jupiter Serapeon, where a Spanish palace came to be erected; plundered by Alaric, Attila, and Genseric; scourged by earthquakes and volcanoes until no man would live here, until Don Pedro de Toledo, Spanish Governor of Naples, employed Raphael's pupils to beautify it with frescoes—is now but a vulgar hamlet, beset with guides, ready to sell their souls for two francs, or to conduct you to Cumæ, Lake Avernus, or Baia.

One half-naked, walnut-skinned youth lifts his voice to say, "A franc and a half," at which, as spoiling the market, he gets jostled out and kicked.

The whole circle of imperial Neapolis and Virgil's classic localities for two francs—all—all! The spot where Nero compassed the murder of his mother, and she, the great Agrippina, was slain; Caligula sailed in his golden fleet of yachts, purple-sailed; St. Paul set his apostolic feet, hurrying to Rome; where the foul fiends rose, in Avernus; the Sybil's stern throne set before a tripod in the blackness of dense forests; where Æneas was led along the Stygian bed; where Cicero lounged in his pillared villa by the sea-

side ; where Augustus loitered with Livia, lulled by the luscious breeze ; and where his daughter, the vicious Julia, bathed, and invented new crimes—all for two francs ! It cannot be counted dear !

The Bay of Baiæ, between Pausilippo and Pozzuoli, is full of islands. Nisida is one of them, an ancient volcanic crater, broken down on one side into a tiny harbour, with its castle used 'as a state-prison, and rows of pretty white bathing-huts below, where, in republican days, lay a villa belonging to young Lucullus, to which Brutus retired after the murder of Cæsar, and whither he returned to take leave of Portia before the fatal battle of Philippi, which brought back Cæsar's ghost to earth, as we all know who read Plutarch and Shakespeare.

Behind, rearing long sinister lines, Procida, and poor earthquake-torn Ischia, mixed up irrevocably in one mountain mass, the double volcanic summits of Ischia dominating the pile, into which join the rocky cliffs of Misenum at the extreme horn of the Bay of Baiæ. Misenum is, to all intents and purposes an island, being quite detached from the mainland by the "Mare Morto," the entire group cutting the azure sea into narrow channels, various, romantic, wild. There is no town visible, no village, no towers ; a few straggling pines, and a little underwood—that is all. An abrupt turn in the road, and I leave the still waters of the Bay of Baiæ to the left, just at a point where the ruined temples, castle, and cavern of Misenum come into sight, and turn up a dusty, dry road through vineyards, the horizon of grouped up islands, as I rise, pressing themselves closer and closer together into fresh forms of beauty, with intenser lights and shadows, as the sun rises to its zenith. Anon Lake Avernus opens out to the left, joining the Lucrine lake, famous for its oysters from the time of Julius Cæsar, and large enough for Agrippa to use it for a mimic representation of the battle of Actium, now but a fosse ever since the volcanic eruption of Monte Movo swallowed up the land.

Avernus lies deep down, with sloping banks, once embedded in gloomy forests, terrifying the mind of man, now cut down and laid bare, losing all its mystic horror, and reducing it, at the present time, to the condition of an ugly pond, breathing malaria. The dusty road continues through vineyards, under the shadow of Monte Movo, all pumice-stone and lava, until I plunge into the coolness

of a rocky lane leading to Cumæ. On a rise the principal entrance breaks upon me entire—Porta Felice, of red Roman brick-work, surmounting what look like caves cut in the tufa rock, but are in reality remnants of walls and ramparts. Porta Felice itself opens on emptiness, not even a city of the dead, like Pompeii, but blank blue sky. On a little side-path leading into trellised vines, a peasant is standing in the sun, clad in a knitted suit, of which each stitch and mesh glares out like mosaic in the ardent light, into which I, who had left the carriage, also pass, to become glorious in my turn. Before me stretches the western seaboard ; no bay this time, but the open ocean sweeping along a golden strand of true Ausonian brightness to where the white cliffs of Mola di Gaeta and Terracina rise over purple waves. What an azure world mingled in many tints, from the paleness of an evening sky to the deep shade of mountains heavy with thunder-laden clouds, the delicate tinting of the cup of the blue flax-flowers to the harsh azure of mosaic or majolica ; the blue-green of a cat's-eye to the calm fulness of a turquoise—all blues, with here and there burnished streaks as of sand-banks and motes, and light patches caught from the sun and thrown back again in fields as of glittering jewels on the waves !

"Down below," I hear a voice saying which makes me start, until I find it comes from the glistening peasant who has been watching me as I watch the sea, and now speaks in a horrible Neapolitan patois, pointing to a honeycombed mound of ruin far afield, "is the Acropolis." And then he lapses into silence, and my eye ranges over the site of what once was Cumæ, now a pestiferous marsh, long lines of pine-woods, like sombre ribbons, winding in between. The Necropolis of Cumæ is the most interesting in the world ; a portion of the funereal vases are now in the British Museum. Whole families were found in the tombs, one skeleton covered with asbestos, in the remains of a robe embroidered in gold, the threads perfect ; in another tomb was a suit of Grecian armour, now placed in the armoury of the Tower of London ; false heads lying by the side of bones, with glass eyes, the features perfect.

Such is Chalcidic Cumæ—desolate with countless desolations—the last the Goth.

I proceed through the deep rocky banks of the same narrow lane, shutting out the

yellow bricks of the Porta Felice, tree-planted, and with ferns and hedge-plants in a grateful shade, the "Via Domitiana," as it is called, leading to the Lake of Fusano, along the outskirts of the farther side of Lake Avernus. A lovely lane through which the blue sky peeps—the indented sides wreathed with pink mesembrianthemum, and briony, and white may. A very ancient lane indeed, for we jolt over Roman pavements, and pass a ruined arch, said to be the remains of the Villa Cumana of Cicero, when he met "the young Augustus," in the age of youthful beauty his bust portrays—like modern Italians, these Romans had villas on every separate estate—and so into a tunnel as long as Pausilippo, stopping midway to gaze at some crumbling walls, called a temple to Apollo, and the Sybil's Cave—good names, but inarticulate as to fact, and most confused—with news of another tunnel farther on, along the shores of Lake Avernus, which I decline to view.

But what is not at all apocryphal, when we emerge, is a glorious sea-line on which the sun plays triumphant, all blue and green, in peacock tints; the delicate vines trailing on red rocks, the dark mouth of the tunnel we have left, and a glimpse at Lake Avernus, quite green and sylvan on this side, and sheeted with low underwood which should be forest—a very pleasant gate of hell, if hell at all; and a good modern road by which I benefit, the Roman pavement being most classical, but rough.

I believe I have forgotten to mention that I am on my way from Cumæ to Lake Fusano, inland by the lane, skirting these woods so filled with Virgil's landmarks, that I realise the Sybil as a fact, and Æneas as flesh and blood; but that the trees being all cut down, the mystery is gone, and the poem vulgarised.

I pass continually fragments of walls and reticulated work in brick. Again the road falls into ruin, and the wheels clog between rough blocks—here landing on a ledge, there deep down in a watery gully. Without a careful driver, and the meekest of steeds, we, too, should be ruins, we do so bump and scrape; an alce here and there looking down upon us from a high bank, and white caper-flowers to tell we are in the south. The air is sweet with cloves, the sun's rays heavy with beans. It is very idyllic, but oppressive, until air wafts to us from Lake Fusano; the port of Cumæ, also famous for its oysters, the flat banks covered with black ilex woods, out

of which opens a canal leading to the sea. Again Ischia's double volcanic summits peep out, tranquil now, and innocent-looking, pressing in over the pastoral landscape, and a pretty, pillared water-palace stands on the shore. A peaceful, quiet spot, built by Neapolitan kings, as a relief to the ever-changing historic names, straining the understanding to the memory of the past. A little turn in this pastoral district, then down an awful dip, straight into Baia, and the high-road to Naples which skirts the margin of the bay. On, by white houses gleaming on green rocks, broken into calcareous greys and browns, on which plays the rippling sea; beside temples and ruins, an inn with a vine arbour where we eat, and brown-skinned peasants and beggars, dogs, fishermen, and guides—an obligato foreground like a chorus in Masaniello, passing in and out as the action demands, giving one a feeling that they lurk behind the wings ready to emerge as the conductor's bâton waves the proper note.

Eighteen centuries have not washed out the beauties of "voluptuous" Baia, when "all Rome" crowded to it, and each inch of land was so appropriated by villas, that the last comers had to build into the sea. Every hillock bears crumbling walls, each rock cut with subterranean passage, baths, chambers, nymphaeum—proof of the luxury of those degenerate days, when the very air breathed vice, and those Roman matrons, says Martial, "who arrived pure as Penelope, left with the reputation of a Helen."

There are the once lordly baths down by the sea; the still domed Temple of Venus, with vaulted roof; the Temple of Mercury and of Diana. An aqueduct, subterranean galleries, and caldarium, showing what a lordly pile it was; also the theatre, with long passages into the hill, and the remains of steps and outer walls, stucco and frescoes; the villa of Hortensius, out at sea, where his wife decorated her carp with golden ear-rings, and plotted his mother's murder; the villa of Julius Cæsar, where Octavia lived when Mark Antony of the red hair and Jewish nose forsook her for Cleopatra; and there is the dark outline of the desolate promontory of Misenum, under which rode the whole Roman fleet. Misenum, once a city, of which all has vanished but the line of causeway connecting it with its port, the "Mare Morto," and the most wonderful underground monument, firm and massive, as if just built; the Piscina Mirabilis, an aqueduct, two hundred and

twenty feet long in five distinct galleries, with stairs of forty steps each, up and down which I pass, amid dripping water, in wonder and amaze.

Looking out afar, on the cliffs of Misenum, a grand sniff of the ocean mingles with the sweet country odours; a drove of goats comes tinkling in to be milked. The horses which dragged me up sleep like their driver; an amiable cow, tethered to the pillar of a ruined portal, is solemnly milked; a group of boys arrive leading a snow-white lamb; a woman sells lemons on a board placed between her naked feet, her hands whisking fresh herbs to keep off the flies; another sits at a table with cooked pork and salame, side by side with tomatoes and capsicums; a girl works at a sewing-machine, with a rose in her hair; and children crawl about among the stones.

Then I drive back to Naples by the broad road, following the bay, in that mystic hour which is neither day nor night, when the sea-breeze lulls, and the waves lazily lap the shore; when the sea-birds, so noisy in the day, are gone to rest, and only the hoot of an owl or the croak of a frog to break the silence—the hour between the hum of the burning day, and the soft awakings of the southern night, when the stars glimmer out one by one, until the whole heaven seems sown with gems. Guitars tinkle in orange-groves, and the rustic lover steals out to meet the maiden of his heart; sturdy peasants crowd under the vine-arches of wine-booths, and the old crones shake their bald heads, and tell dismal tales. Anon, the light of ever gay Naples comes into sight; the hum of a great multitude strikes on my ear; the echo of music runs along the shore; coloured lamps garlanding dark trees light up the night; and now and then a many-coloured rocket shoots into the sky.

There is a fête on the Chiaja in the Villa Reale, where palms fling huge branches, and magnolias grow in the shade, and I descend from my carriage, and mix in the crowd, ending my day as I began it, with a hymn of praise, "That Nature is so fair, and I am there to see."

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XL. AFTER THE RAIN.

THEY talked at first on their old subject of dogs, and especially about Wool, who sat between them, looking intelligently

from one to the other. Gerald would have liked to ask Theo what turns of road, and fate, and fancy had brought her into the middle of his colliery, the last place on earth where a visitor to Mr. Goodall might have been expected to appear; but for this very reason he felt a little awkwardness, and asked no questions. After all, he had not room for much curiosity in his mind; the charm and wonder of seeing her there drove out all other feelings.

Presently she began to remark on what she had seen outside; the furnaces, the clay-covered boys, the quiet way in which so much work was carried on.

"And are you the head of it all?" she said.

"I am the manager. I am paid," said Gerald. "My brother and another man are the chiefs of the concern."

"Do you go down the pit?" said Theo, "or do you stay all day in this room?"

"No," he said, smiling. "It doesn't look, does it, like a place to stay all day in? I go down the pit pretty often to see that all is right there. This isn't our best room, Miss Meynell. There is a better one inside; the clerks work out here; but it is locked to-day, and my brother has the key in his pocket. I wish he hadn't."

"This is quite good enough for a shelter from the rain," said Theo. "But you must be very glad to go home in the evening."

"Yes; don't you think it must be a degraded sort of life?" said Gerald, looking at her sadly.

"I was not thinking so," said Theo. After a moment's pause she went on: "How is your sister? Did she tell you how we met yesterday?"

"She could talk of nothing but your kindness. And from her description, and from the fact of your being with Mr. Goodall, I guessed who you must be."

"I was not able to do anything for her, after all," said Theo. "And is she going to live always with you?"

At that moment some one passed the window, and Gerald, without answering her, rushed out into the little passage.

"What are you doing in there? Are you ready?" asked a rather pleasant voice. "I have left Warren to entertain Ada in the road. She's awfully disgusted. She had better—What dog is that?"

Gerald answered with a few muttered words. Theo felt suddenly a little vexed with both him and herself; the shower had been nothing; though the office window

did not show much light, it was evidently over now. She got up, and walked out with her coldest and quietest air into the passage, encountering Mr. Litton at the door.

There was certainly a likeness between the brothers. Gerald Fane, when he was a few years older, might look as hard, and worn, and unscrupulous as this man, whose bold, shrewd, sneering face was still rather handsome, and not altogether disagreeable. Theo, though she looked at him, was quite unconscious of the slight surprised smile which greeted her as she walked out of the office door. Gerald was only too well aware of it, and his eyes flashed, but he kept his temper down, and introduced the two to each other.

"You are an old acquaintance of my brother's, I think, Miss Meynell," said Clarence Litton, as he and Gerald walked with Theo towards the gate.

"Yes," said Theo. "But I do not know this country at all, and Mr. Fane appeared at the right moment, and gave me shelter from the rain. You were telling me about your sister," she said, turning to Gerald. "Is she really going to live with you?"

"I hope so," he answered.

"A sister like ours is a great anxiety," said Mr. Litton. "We must try this experiment; but I am not sure that these two are not too young to take care of each other. Don't you think so, Miss Meynell, from what you have seen of them?"

"I don't know. I hardly think Mr. Fane would have left his sister for so many hours at the station yesterday," said Theo very quietly.

But she just lifted her eyes, and Gerald caught a glance which made him silently happy.

"I can't say what he might have done, but certainly it was wrong of me," said Clarence Litton. "But I had motives—I had ends in view; and even one's sister must give way sometimes to business arrangements; she may not be the worse off in the end; and I think she has forgiven me now. She ought to remember that she might never have spoken to you if it had not been for me."

"Oh yes—we were coming down into the same neighbourhood," said Theo.

"And you——" began Mr. Litton; but he checked himself, with a glance at Gerald, for the young fellow looked a little dangerous, and the end of his sen-

tence might have bordered on being impertinent.

It would be a fine thing to chaff Gerald about by-and-by, that opportune shelter from the rain, which, after all, had stopped almost as soon as it began; but with a girl like this, it would not do to approach within a mile of a joke on the subject. Mr. Litton had instinct enough to know that, though of late years his acquaintance had not been among very refined women.

As they came down the muddy road to the gate, Ada Fane, who was standing there with Mr. Warren, hurried eagerly to meet them. Her companion stood staring, and amusing himself with a low whistle. Gerald had never before felt so bitterly ashamed of him, or quite perceived what a repulsive object he was. He tried to stand between him and Miss Meynell, that she might not see him, and devoutly hoped that Clarence would not dare to introduce him to her.

"I did not expect to see you again so soon," said Theo, taking Ada's hand.

The girl was almost breathless with delight. She was entirely mystified; she could not imagine what had brought her friend here, but she looked from her to her brother with quick shy pleasure.

"Oh, Gerald, you were right, then; it is Miss Meynell, and she remembers you!"

With Clarence sardonically smiling in the background, Gerald could not help flushing as he answered:

"Yes; it came on to rain, and Miss Meynell happened to be walking through the colliery, and I looked out of the office, quite by accident——"

He stopped, flushing a little more, for nobody but Clarence seemed to be listening to him.

"I am very fond of walking about and discovering things," Theo explained, looking down into Ada's fair, wondering face. "I meant to discover you some day, but this is sooner than I hoped."

Mr. Warren stood by the gate and stared at her as she walked through. She did not even give him a glance, but, with the slightly imperious air which sometimes belonged to her quite unconsciously, she took possession of Ada, and walked on with her along the dismal black lane towards the railway. The three men found themselves left behind. Gerald walked apart from the others, with his eyes on the ground. Mr. Warren began grinning and asking questions.

"That's a fine young woman; where did you meet her, Fane? Does she take an interest in brickmaking? It's the same that came down with Goodall yesterday. A relation of his wife's, I suppose. Now I'm singular, I dare say, in admiring Miss Ada the most of that pair. As to you, Fane, if that's your taste, I don't wonder you feel yourself above your work, poor chap! I say, has she got any money?"

"He's sensitive, don't chaff him, Warren," said Clarence, having caught some mutterings under Gerald's breath, which conveyed hints of throwing somebody into the ditch.

"It's a pity if he can't take a joke," said Warren. "Tell you what, Litton," as the young man suddenly went on with long strides and overtook Miss Meynell and her sister; "that brother of yours is the worst feature in this concern."

"He does his work; we have nothing to complain of."

"He does his work, but he hates it all the time. He hasn't a bit of gratitude in his nature. Where would he be, I should like to know, if it wasn't for you and me? And he's got a nasty cross temper. That little sister of his will be an angel if she can put up with him, as she must for a year or two, I suppose."

"Thanks; don't trouble yourself about that, they get on perfectly well."

"I hate all that disgusting conceit in a fellow who owes other people the very rags he stands up in," Mr. Warren went on grumbling, on which Clarence burst into a short laugh.

"After all, Warren, he's my brother."

"Your half-brother, and you think a great deal too much of him for your own interests. What are they stopping for?"

After passing under the railway, the lane made a turn under some large oak-trees, beyond which lay a brown field of standing sheaves, and then the ground sloped up to another road and some red cottages, which were the outskirts of Deerhurst. The lane here began to climb, and the three young people had paused at the top of a steep little hill, where a footpath led back across a clover-field to the railway, and so up and along the eastern ridge to Woodcote.

"The short cut to Woodcote," said Mr. Litton, as he and his companion followed them up the lane. "Miss Meynell's best way back, which no doubt Gerald is going to show her."

"Meynell! Is that her name?" said

Mr. Warren, looking sharply at him. "I have heard that name before. I say—didn't one of those Norths marry a Meynell?"

Clarence Litton's yellow skin turned a little yellower.

"I think so," he said quietly. "It did not strike me at once; but I believe they are all dead."

"I'm alive, though," said Mr. Warren.

"Why do you remind me of that?" said Clarence, walking along with his eyes on the ground and his hands in his pockets.

"For two reasons. First, that you may not forget you have a friend capable of giving advice; and my advice is, in case of accidents, don't let those two charming young idiots of yours become intimate with that young lady. That's good advice, isn't it?"

"Well?" said Clarence coolly.

"Also that you may not forget all you owe me, and how I mean to be paid. I sometimes think your memory is getting short on that subject. It's an old bargain, though, and I mean it to be carried out."

"I don't forget anything," said Litton impatiently. "There is one condition, though, you must remember."

"Only a matter of form."

"I am not so sure of that," muttered his partner. "Well, Warren," he said in his usual voice, "don't be in such a fool of a hurry, and don't lose your temper. I thought so; here is my sister coming back alone."

Poor Ada had felt herself a little injured when Gerald told her she had better go back; a walk with him and Miss Meynell would have been so much pleasanter than one with Clarence and Mr. Warren, who would persist in staring at her and paying her compliments. But Gerald knew best; she was sure of that; and when he said, "Clarence will want you; you had better not come with me," she submitted at once, only looking a little sad as she wished Miss Meynell good-bye, and watched the two as they set off across the field.

Theo, who felt a real interest in the child, had asked her one or two questions in the few minutes they were alone, and had found out that life with her brother was not yet quite the bright thing she had imagined it yesterday. "The people that come to the house—business people"—Ada had spoken of these with a sort of shrinking, and Theo was conscious enough of the appearance of Mr. Warren to feel strong sympathy. Neither did she care at all for

the looks of Mr. Litton, and she thought that John Goodall's opinion of the two men was probably just enough. Gerald Fane seemed to her so very different, that the connection between these four became something queer, hard to understand, and interesting to the last degree.

She was dreaming of this as she walked on with Gerald, across the railway, and up the high open fields that led towards Woodcote. She could not very well question him about his circumstances, and he, not knowing how her thoughts were occupied, was afraid that he had bored her by offering to show her the way home.

But presently she looked into her guide's face, as he was helping her over a stile, and was roused to a smile by the sort of reproachful sadness she saw there.

"I was thinking of your sister," she said hastily, to explain herself. "You must be very fond of her."

"Well, you see, she and I have nobody else; and it's not much good my being fond of her," said Gerald.

"I am fond of her too," said Theo.

"Are you?" he said rather vaguely. "That's awfully kind of you."

"Oh no, I couldn't help it. But now, as I have told you that, may I say what I think?"

"Thank you, if you will," he said in a low voice.

The things she said sounded so strange, so sweet, she looked so grave and earnest, and without the smallest affectation was so different from everybody else in the world, that he felt it was not only her beauty which made him literally long to throw himself at her feet.

"It is very nice for her to live with you," said Theo, and her slight emphasis made him flush and smile. "But if I were you—do forgive me, it is no business of mine—"

"Please go on," said Gerald very meekly. Then he added as she hesitated a little: "You only saw that man Warren as you passed him just now, but you think I ought to kick him downstairs. I should like to, but one can't always indulge one's self."

"No," said Theo, "I suppose not. But at least, if I were you, I should keep him out of my sister's way, if I had a dear little sister like that."

"You have no sisters?"

"I have no one at all, and perhaps that is why I am so very impertinent. Because I know nothing at all of you, or your arrangements—and possibly that friend of your brother's may be nice, though he looks rough; but I think, somehow, he annoys your sister, and you will agree with me that she ought to be happy."

"I wish I had the means of making her so," said Gerald. "But a fate pursues some people, Miss Meynell; you know nothing of such lives as ours. I can't be happy, and I can't make her so, and unless we keep Warren in a good temper we may find ourselves starving. He gives me my work; I can't quarrel with him, or forbid him the house because Ada doesn't like him."

"I am so sorry," said Theo, after a moment's silence, for there was an almost passionate sadness in the young man's voice. "I am so very sorry I said anything at all. I might have known you would do everything you could."

The walk was very short, and they were close upon Woodcote. Gerald did not answer this last speech of hers.

"You know the way now," he said, "and I think Mr. and Mrs. Goodall are coming to meet you. Good-bye."

They were only a few yards beyond the last stile. Theo, at the moment, could think of nothing but her self-reproach. She let him go without a word. He was over the stile instantly, and half across the next field. She would almost have called him back, but John and Helen were really coming along the road, so she only turned her head and looked after him as he hurried away into the west, which was now all brilliant, the golden gate of her dreams.

"My dear Theo!" said Helen.

The words were a thousand remonstrances, while Mr. Goodall, too, looked after the young man, and coughed a surprised disapproval.

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